

in prison for the illegal possession of female wildlife, plus a fine of MYR50,000 (USD11,974). The prison terms are to run concurrently from the date of arrest but a stay of execution on the prison terms was allowed, pending an appeal.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2zhqjC>, 30 October 2018

**PHILIPPINES:** On 3 March 2019, authorities at Ninoy Aquino International Airport seized 1,529 tortoises from unclaimed luggage arriving on a flight from Hong Kong. The species, none native to Hong Kong, included Star Tortoises *Geochelone elegans*, African Spurred Tortoises *Centrochelys sulcata*, Red-footed Tortoises *Chelonoidis carbonarius* and Hermann's Tortoises *Testudo hermanni* (all CITES II species), plus several other tortoise and freshwater turtle species.

In October 2018, authorities seized 250 live geckos Gekkonidae shipped from Hong Kong to a cargo warehouse near Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

TRAFFIC: <https://bit.ly/2UuUF45>, 5 March 2019

## RHINOCEROSES

**All species of Rhinocerotidae are listed in CITES Appendix I except the South African and Swaziland populations of *Ceratotherium simum*, which are listed in Appendix II.**

**HONG KONG SAR:** On 14 February 2019, authorities at Hong Kong International Airport seized some 40 kg of rhino horns from two men in transit from Johannesburg, South Africa, bound for Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam.

On 5 April 2019, Customs officials at Hong Kong International Airport seized 82.5 kg of rhino horn/cut pieces. The consignment from South Africa, bound for Malaysia, was declared as "auto parts" and was detected following x-ray screening.

The Government of the Hong Kong SAR media release: <https://bit.ly/2vi3l3t>, 14 February 2019; Channel News Asia: <https://bit.ly/2KYwn2>, 6 April 2019

**MOZAMBIQUE:** On 16 October 2018, police at Maputo International Airport detained a Vietnamese citizen bound for Viet Nam with 10 rhino horns (11.9 kg) in his luggage, in boxes labelled as industrial machinery.

The previous week, a Chinese citizen was detained in possession of nine rhino horns (see TRAFFIC Bulletin 30(2):76).

Club of Mozambique: <https://bit.ly/2lQLf0A>; AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2P4Kfcm>, 17 October 2018

**NAMIBIA:** On 8 February 2019, at Opuwo Magistrates' Court, Ruteni Muharukua of the Kunene region was fined NAD25,000 (USD1,770) (or five years in prison). He was also sentenced to two years' imprisonment, suspended for five years, on the same count on condition he is not convicted of committing a similar offence during the period of suspension.

Ruteni was arrested in October 2017 in Etosha National Park after attempting to poach a rhino; another person accompanying him was killed. Although the duo did not shoot the rhino, Muharukua was still considered guilty of the offence of hunting specially protected game.

On 12 April 2019, at Windhoek High Court, an appeal being heard against a conviction handed down to four Chinese citizens in March 2014 on charges of attempting to export rhino horns was not only dismissed but their sentences were increased. Wang Hui, Pu Xuexin, Li Zhibing and Li Xiaoliang were found guilty in 2014 of attempting to export 14 rhino horns and a Leopard *Panthera pardus* (CITES I) skin. Their original trial ended with all four being sentenced to between 11 and 14 years' imprisonment.

The appeal court decreed that the defendants should also have been found guilty of unlawfully acquiring, possessing, using or taking out of Namibia the proceeds of unlawful activities. Their sentences were replaced with one of 20 years' imprisonment, of which five years were conditionally suspended, resulting in an effective term for each of 15 years in prison, backdated to September 2016.

The Namibian: <https://www.namibian.com.na/75528/read/Etosha-poacher-gets-fines-or-eight-years-in-jail>, 11 February 2019; AllAfrica: <https://bit.ly/2vkCfbY>, 15 April 2019

**SOUTH AFRICA:** In November 2018, at Skukuza Regional Court, Patrick Nkuna of Mozambique was sentenced to 33 years and three months' imprisonment for trespassing, rhino poaching, possession of an illegal firearm and attempted murder.

On 19 November 2015, the accused illegally entered the Pretoriuskop area of Kruger National Park and shot and killed a Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* and shot at, and damaged, a helicopter after being spotted by rangers.

On 28 November 2018, Jetro Moyagabo Malema, George Itumeleng Thutlwa and Joseph Kgosietsile Tsieme who were arrested in Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province, after attempting to kill a rhino in June 2017, were given prison terms of up to 10 years (some sentences suspended) and a range of fines. The rhino was injured.



**Rhino horns (82 kg) from South Africa, bound for Malaysia, and seized at Hong Kong International Airport in April 2019.**

On 9 January 2019, at O.R. Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, Customs officials intercepted a consignment declared as "decoration items" that were found to contain 36 rhino horns (116 kg) after being discovered by a detector dog. The goods were destined for Dubai and had been concealed under laminated wooden sheets in boxes that were otherwise filled with doormats and decorative items.

On 3 April 2019, at Grahamstown High Court, Forget Ndlovu, George Jabulani Ndlovu, and Skhumbuzo Ndlovu (not related) were each sentenced to 25 years in prison after being found guilty on 50 charges related to rhino poaching in the Eastern Cape. The men, two of whom are Zimbabwe nationals, are believed to have been involved in some 13 cases of rhino poaching in the Eastern Cape over a period of five years. They were arrested in June 2016 at Makana Resort, in Makhanda, with the freshly-harvested horn of a White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* in their possession. Reportedly, they also had a darting rifle, drugs to dart animals, darts, saws and knives, camping gear, cars and mobile phones. The investigation took three years and the group had twice been released on bail.

Mpumalanga News: <https://bit.ly/2DvHBpp>, 12 November 2018; <https://bit.ly/2VnN0ZU>, 30 November 2018; South African Revenue Service (SARS) media release: <https://bit.ly/2ZxIEzs>, 10 January 2019; RNews: <https://bit.ly/2DtOMhQ>, 3 April 2019

**THAILAND:** On 30 January 2019 it was reported that Bach Mai, aka "Boonchai", arrested at Suvarnabhumi Airport in December 2018 for attempting to smuggle 14 rhino horns into the country and who was subsequently sentenced to two and a half years in prison, had his sentence quashed after a key witness recanted his testimony in court.

Boonchai and members of his family are reportedly key players in one of Asia's biggest animal trafficking networks, allegedly responsible for exporting wildlife through Lao PDR to Viet Nam and China.

Bangkok Post: <https://bit.ly/2KYzMi>; BBC: <https://bbc.in/2VoPmYn>, 20 January 2018; The Guardian: <https://bit.ly/2cwnnuv>, 26 September 2016

**TURKEY:** On 8 December 2018, security forces at Atatürk Airport, Istanbul, seized 34 kg of rhino horns from luggage belonging to a Vietnamese national travelling from Mozambique to Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. Authorities were alerted by previous trips taken by the passenger, which prompted security forces to detain the suspect on landing.

On 8 February 2019, it was reported that security forces at Atatürk Airport had seized 21 rhino horns which were detected following x-ray screening of luggage belonging to two Vietnamese passengers in transit from South Africa to Viet Nam.

Daily Sabah (Turkey): <https://bit.ly/2PrSPjx>, 9 December 2018; AA Anadolu Agency: <https://bit.ly/2tkrLs1>, 8 February 2019